

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Special Edition for IEP Teams
- 2** Notes from the Contractor to MI-Access Coordinators
- 3** Technology Helps Students with Disabilities Access the Curriculum and Assessments
- 4** How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations
- 7** Important NCLB Updates
- 8** Changes for 2005/2006 That Affect IEP Team Decisions
- 9** Extra! Extra! Last Paper Issue of *The Assist*
- 10** Completing the IEP Assessment Form
- 11** IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Flow Chart
- 12** IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Checklist
- 13** IDEA 2004: What's New?
- 15** Sign Up for New OEAA Listservs
- 15** Glossary

Back Cover

Important MI-Access Dates
Bookmark these Web sites



P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909
Phone: (517) 335-0471

The Assist

Helping to Improve Access to and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

April 2005

SPECIAL EDITION

Volume 4, No. 3

SPECIAL EDITION FOR IEP TEAMS

Dear Readers,

Congratulations on completing another successful administration of MI-Access! Now it is time to turn our attention to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) preparation process. Each year, the April issue of *The Assist* is dedicated solely to providing information that IEP Teams need to make informed decisions about state assessment for students with disabilities. This year is no different. In the article titled "Changes for 2005/2006 That Affect IEP Team Decisions" on page 8, we discuss changes in (1) the grades assessed, (2) the assessments themselves, and (3) the assessment schedule—all of which may affect IEP Team deliberations.

In the article titled "How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations" on pages 4–7, we define important NCLB terminology, show how NCLB calculations are made, and discuss the potential ramifications of different decisions on NCLB participation rates and Adequate Yearly Progress.

We also have several articles dedicated to resources available to help IEP Team members in the decision-making process. Some of the resources include (1) Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource, which helps districts, schools, and IEP Team members match available assistive technology to student needs (see page 3); (2) an updated version of the MDE's "IEP Team State

Assessment Decision-Making Flow Chart," which walks team members through the questions they need to address after they determine which state-level assessment their student will take (see page 11); and (3) an updated "IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Checklist," which acts as a companion piece to the flow chart (see page 12). These articles—as well as the others in this "Special Edition" of *The Assist*—should help inform IEP Team members as they prepare for upcoming meetings.

You will notice that some of the articles from last year have been repeated, but they have all been updated to reflect new information. Therefore, be sure to (1) read them carefully yourself, and (2) share the most current versions with IEP Team members—particularly parents—so they can be well-informed, contributing members at your meetings.

Thank you for participating in the assessment process and the Functional Independence 2.1 pilot this winter, and for helping to ensure that spring IEP Team meetings are informative and productive.

Peggy Dutcher
Coordinator, Assessment for Students
with Disabilities Program
dutcherp@mi.gov



State Board of Education
P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909

Mrs. Kathleen N. Straus (Detroit)
President

Mr. John C. Austin (Ann Arbor)
Vice President

Mrs. Carolyn L. Curtin (Evart)
Secretary

Mrs. Marianne Yared McGuire (Detroit)
Treasurer

Mrs. Nancy Danhof (East Lansing)
NASBE Delegate

Mrs. Elizabeth W. Bauer (Birmingham)
Board Member

Mr. Reginald M. Turner (Detroit)
Board Member

Mrs. Eileen Lappin Weiser (Ann Arbor)
Board Member

Ex Officio

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor

Jeremy M. Hughes, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction

Funded by the Michigan Department of
Education and the U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs.

2003/2004

State Board of Education Strategic Goal

Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students/children with primary emphasis on high priority schools and students.

Revised at the October 23, 2003
Board Meeting.

NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR TO MI-ACCESS COORDINATORS

Now that assessment administration is complete and assessment materials are on their way back to the contractor, it is time for BETA/TASA to start scanning, scoring, and producing reports.

As part of that process, District MI-Access Coordinators will need to review their *Tested Rosters* and verify that (1) all students who were assessed are accounted for, and (2) each student's demographic information is correct. These activities are necessary to ensure that reports are as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Like last year, these activities will take place within the password-protected MEAP Secure Site; therefore, MI-Access coordinators will need to work with their MEAP coordinators (if they are not one and the same) on this task. Unlike last year, final demographic information will be included in *all* MI-Access reports (state, district, school, classroom, and individual), not just state reports. As a result, a fairly aggressive update schedule has been established.

Tested Rosters Schedule

District information will be posted on the MEAP Secure Site during three different windows:

- April 13 to April 26
- April 18 to May 2
- April 25 to May 9

The window during which information is posted is determined by when a district's assessment materials are received and processed by BETA/TASA. Each District MI-Access Coordinator will receive an e-mail notice indicating that his or her district's data have been posted. Coordinators

will then have about two weeks to (1) review their *Tested Rosters* to make sure that scan documents were received for every student who should have been assessed, and (2) request research where there are discrepancies. Districts **MUST** review their *Tested Rosters* during the window indicated in the e-mail. No extensions will be granted.

The MI-Access Online System will also include a list of districts for which data have been posted and the closing date by which they must review and request any necessary changes to their *Tested Rosters*. If you do not receive an e-mail message from BETA/TASA, or have misplaced it, you may use the MI-Access Online System to find this information.

Demographic Updates

For MI-Access students who were pre-identified in the MI-Access Online System, District MI-Access Coordinators can review and update student demographic information **prior** to the posting of the *Tested Rosters*. Therefore, you may want to start reviewing and updating that information immediately to reduce your workload during the district's designated two-week *Tested Roster* update period.

Please note that important enhancements have been made to the MEAP Secure Site this year related to *Tested Rosters* and demographic updates. A help document that describes these enhancements is posted on the login page of the MEAP Secure Site at www.mi.gov/meap-secure.

Watch for an e-mail notice with more instructions during the first week of April.

Technology Helps Students with Disabilities Access the Curriculum and Assessments

The purpose of assistive technology (AT) is to help students with disabilities engage more effectively in the general curriculum and participate more fully and appropriately in state- and districtwide assessments. Therefore, as IEP Teams develop their plans and discuss which assessments are most appropriate for their students, they need to review available AT and determine if its use would benefit their students.

Determining which technological tools to use with students can be a challenging task. Fortunately, Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource (MATR) is available to help districts and schools—as well as IEP Team members—expand their knowledge of AT.

MATR operates through an Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) State Discretionary Grant awarded by the Michigan State Board of Education. Its goal is to help districts make better decisions about student AT needs so that students can better master curriculum content, and demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the classroom and on assessments.

MATR provides five different kinds of services.

1. Information and Referral: MATR staff gathers information about state-of-the-art technology, daily living devices, and equipment and, using that research, identifies assistive technology solutions for students with disabilities. It also provides current product and service information and identifies available resources in response to specific requests. In addition, MATR maintains a collection of catalogs, reprints, and publications to assist AT personnel in the state's schools with identifying and obtaining effective technical tools.



2. Consultation Services and Team Enhancement: MATR helps assess student needs for AT and consults with local AT teams about the options suggested by the assessment. Emphasis during the assessment and consultation process is placed on (1) building local district capacity to address student needs, and (2) involving local district personnel, students, and families in decision-making and service provision.

3. Materials Resources: MATR houses and maintains an extensive library of existing large print and Braille textbooks and makes them available to school districts around Michigan. If MATR does not have a needed textbook, it will search for the title in national databases at no charge. MATR also will produce out-of-print textbooks in large print or Braille for a nominal fee. In addition, MATR operates an equipment lending library so that districts may borrow and try AT items prior to making a purchase.

4. Training and Personnel Development: MATR provides training opportunities for local personnel who want to participate in and/or lead team efforts to develop and implement AT plans for students. These training sessions and demonstrations are held in cooperation with local district personnel. Furthermore, MATR conducts sessions at

statewide professional conferences; hosts in-services, workshops, and seminars; and provides training opportunities for educators and other professionals at the MATR facility in St. Johns, Michigan. It also offers learning opportunities for people in pre-service, in-service, and graduate programs.

5. Communications: MATR maintains a Web site (www.cenmi.org/matr) that can be accessed by others to obtain information, resources, or technical assistance. An online discussion group is moderated by MATR staff at this site, which provides an excellent forum for AT people to identify needed information, generate ideas, and network with others.

One interesting feature of the MATR Web site is its list of examples of successful AT strategies—some high tech and some not—that have been used around the state to improve student access to the curriculum and assessment. Following are some examples that appear on the site.

- A teacher consultant in Gratiot Isabella RESD used "Clicker 4" to enable nonverbal students and those with limited writing ability to take the MI-Access Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments on the computer.
- A Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Delta-Schoolcraft ISD engaged her students in making PowerPoint Books. Each page of the book was scanned onto one PowerPoint slide, text and sound effects (provided by the students) were added, and the fully narrated books were burned onto CDs. Students take the CD books home to "read" with their families.

continued on page 8

How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has two major components that require states to collect and use data related to the state assessment of students with and without disabilities: (1) Participation Rate and (2) Adequate Yearly Progress. This article explains these two components, how they are calculated, and how IEP Team decisions may affect their calculation.

NCLB Participation Rates

The federal government uses NCLB "participation rate" calculations to show how many students are participating—as required by NCLB and IDEA (1997 and 2004)—in state assessment systems. The rate is calculated by content area (English language arts and mathematics) and by grade.

NCLB requires that states include in their state-, district-, and school-level report cards the number and percent of students who participated in state assessments overall and in eleven required subgroups (where 10 or more students are enrolled). The subgroups include: (1) gender; (2) American Indian or Alaskan Native; (3) Asian or Pacific Islander; (4) Black, not of Hispanic Origin; (5) Hispanic; (6) White, not of Hispanic Origin; (7) multiracial; (8) students with disabilities; (9) limited English proficient students; (10) economically disadvantaged students; and (11) students with migratory status.

NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress

Like participation rates, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is calculated by grade and content area (English language arts and mathematics), but it is

used by the federal government to show how many students are "proficient" on the state assessments they take. In Michigan, scores are considered proficient for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) if they are in the top two levels (Levels 1 and 2), and scores for MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program, are considered proficient if the student Surpasses or Attains the Performance Standard.

All "proficient" scores, however, may not be used to determine AYP. NCLB stipulates that several adjustments must be made: (1) schools and districts that do not, at a minimum, meet 95 percent participation rates cannot make AYP, (2) only those scores from students who have been enrolled for a full academic year can be counted, and (3) only one percent of scores from students with "significant cognitive disabilities" who are taking alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards can be used when calculating AYP. Following is a more detailed description of these three adjustments plus two additional indicators that are used to determine AYP.

Participation Rates: First, to make AYP, schools and districts must, at a minimum, have 95 percent of their students participate in state assessment—overall and in nine subgroups (where 30 or more students are enrolled). For AYP purposes, gender and migratory status are not included in the subgroup calculations, but all others reported for participation purposes are.

Full Academic Year: Second, only scores for those students who were enrolled for a full academic year—which is defined as the two most recent semi-

annual official count days—can be counted toward AYP. Therefore, any scores from students enrolled for less than a full academic year must be excluded from the calculation.

One Percent Rule: Third, only one percent of proficient scores from students with "significant cognitive disabilities" who take alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (which, in Michigan, means MI-Access) can be used when calculating AYP. The state has developed business rules for determining which proficient MI-Access scores are used.

The percentage of proficient assessment scores needed to make AYP varies by content area and by grade. The first table on page 5 shows the Michigan targets by school year, content area, and grade span. (Please note that Michigan uses multiple year averaging and the NCLB "Safe Harbor" as additional ways that a school can make AYP if its achievement scores fall below the AYP objective or proficient target.)

Additional Indicators: As required by NCLB, states must choose two other indicators to determine AYP. Michigan has chosen attendance rate targets for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rate targets for high schools. (For more details on the definitions and calculations of full academic year, attendance rates, and graduation rates, see the "Guide to Reading School Report Cards" on the Report Card Web site at <http://ayp.mde.state.mi.us/ayp>.

continued on page 5

How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations

continued from page 4

MICHIGAN'S AYP TARGET ACHIEVEMENT GOALS						
Year	Percent of Students "Proficient"					
	Mathematics			Reading/Language Arts		
	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Elementary	Middle School	High School
2002-2003	47%	31%	33%	38%	31%	42%
2003-2004	47%	31%	33%	38%	31%	42%
2004-2005	56%	43%	44%	48%	43%	52%
2005-2006	56%	43%	44%	48%	43%	52%
2006-2007	56%	43%	44%	48%	43%	52%
2007-2008	65%	54%	55%	59%	54%	61%
2008-2009	65%	54%	55%	59%	54%	61%
2009-2010	65%	54%	55%	59%	54%	61%
2010-2011	74%	66%	67%	69%	66%	71%
2011-2012	82%	77%	78%	79%	77%	81%
2012-2013	91%	89%	89%	90%	89%	90%
2013-2014	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Indicators for AYP (where there is an N of 30)

Student Level	Meets NCLB Participation Rates Overall and in 9 Subgroups	Students Enrolled for Full Academic Year	Meets Target Proficient Rate	Meets Target Attendance Rate	Meets Target Graduation Rate
K-8	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9-12*	✓	✓	✓		✓

* If a building has grades 7-9, attendance rates are used instead of graduation rates.

If schools do not make AYP in a particular content area (English language arts or mathematics) for two consecutive school years, the school is identified for improvement and is subject to sanctions under NCLB. Additional, more stringent sanctions apply in subsequent years if the school continues to not make AYP in that same content area. (If you have questions related to NCLB participation rates and/or AYP, please contact the MDE at aypcontactus@michigan.gov.)

IEP Team Decision-making

When IEP Teams are making state assessment decisions for their students, it is important that they understand the terminology used in NCLB and the potential consequences of their decisions on NCLB calculations.

• Which assessment should a student take?

When deciding which state assessment a student with disabilities should take, IEP Team mem-

bers need to know that if their student takes MI-Access, his or her score *will* count toward the participation rate, but it *may or may not* count toward AYP. Why? Because federal rules limit the number of "proficient" alternate assessment scores that can be counted by a district to 1 percent of the total number of students enrolled in each grade assessed. This indirectly affects schools' AYP calculations because only those students

continued on page 6

How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations

continued from page 5

counted as proficient at the district level can be counted as proficient at the school level. (To learn more about the one percent calculation, see the article titled "What Does One Percent Really Mean?" in the January 2005 issue of *The Assist*.)

This does *not* mean that students with disabilities cannot participate in MI-Access. According to IDEA (1997 and 2004), IEP Teams still have sole authority for determining which state assessment is most appropriate for their student based on his or her cognitive functioning, curriculum, and instruction. It simply means that IEP Teams need to factor the potential consequences of taking MI-Access into their decision-making process. If a student is on the border between MEAP and MI-Access, the team should probably choose MEAP, provided it will yield meaningful assessment data for the student. Districts also need to keep in mind that MI-Access is intended *only* for special education students—not Section 504 students.

- **Is the student a Functional Independence 2.1 student?**

NCLB stipulates that only proficient alternate assessment scores of students with the most "significant cognitive disabilities" can be used when calculating Adequate Yearly Progress. While Michigan is still working to clearly define "a student with a significant cognitive disability," it is certain that, at a *minimum*, students taking MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessments will meet the state's definition (see the article

titled "The MDE Again Reviews Draft Guidelines..." on page 9 of the January 2005 issue of *The Assist*).

MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 students will *most likely* meet the clarified state definition. What are the characteristics of a 2.1 student? Typically 2.1 students have, or function as if they have, mild cognitive impairment (as currently defined in the state's guidelines). They **also** have a limited ability to generalize learning across contexts, their learning rates are significantly slower than their age-level peers, they have a restricted knowledge base, **AND** they tend not to be very aware of environmental cues.

The curriculum for 2.1 students would most likely focus on basic academics, social effectiveness, health and fitness, community access, work, and personal and family living. It also would stress minimal reliance on others and maximum functional independence. And, finally, a 2.1 student's instruction typically would be direct and repetitive, and include practical, authentic, and concrete experiences presented in the contexts of daily living, employment, and community living.

What MI-Access has been calling Functional Independence 2.2 students, however, most likely will *not* meet the state's clarified definition. These are students for whom the MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 assessments are not appropriate and there is some question as to whether the MEAP assessments—even with assessment accommodations—are appropriate (that is, neither assessment may appropriately reflect the student's functioning level,

curriculum, and instruction). If it is determined that these students do not meet Michigan's definition, their state assessment scores will count as "not proficient" when calculating AYP.

- **What assessment accommodations are needed?**

Michigan has received word that students using nonstandard assessment accommodations on state assessments will NOT count as being assessed in a district's or school's participation rate. While the state is awaiting confirmation of this decision from the U.S. Education Department, IEP Teams need to keep this potential consequence in mind when determining which assessment accommodations their students need to access a state-level assessment. (A list of the MEAP standard and nonstandard accommodations can be found at www.mi.gov/meap and at www.mi-access.info under the "Policy and Guidelines" tab. Assessment accommodations for the MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 assessments can be found in the *Winter 2005 Functional Independence 2.1 Pilot Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manual* at www.mi.gov/mi-access or www.mi-access.info.)

The table on page 7 summarizes the assessment decisions that IEP Teams may make and how those decisions will affect NCLB calculations.

continued on page 7

How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations

continued from page 6

How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations		
<i>IEP Team Decision</i>	<i>Student's Score Will Count as "Assessed" When Calculating NCLB Participation Rates</i>	<i>Student's Score Will Count When Calculating NCLB AYP</i>
Student will take the MEAP	Yes	The student will count as proficient or not proficient depending on his/her scores for English language arts and mathematics
Student will take MI-Access Participation or Supported Independence	Yes	Surpassed and Attained scores will count as proficient. Emerging Toward scores will count as not proficient.
Student will take Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE (or, in 2005/2006, MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1)	Yes	Even if a student Surpasses or Attains the Performance Standard, his/her score may or may not count as proficient because of the 1% cap
Student will use standard assessment accommodations when being assessed at the state level (MEAP and/or MI-Access)	Yes	The student will count as proficient or not proficient depending on his/her scores for English language arts and mathematics
Student will use nonstandard assessment accommodations when being assessed at the state level (MEAP and/or MI-Access)	The U.S. Education Department has indicated that a student will not count as assessed if a nonstandard accommodation is used. Michigan is awaiting confirmation of this decision.	The U.S. Education Department has indicated that a student will not count as assessed if a nonstandard accommodation is used. Michigan is awaiting confirmation of this decision.

Important NCLB Updates

Exceptions: Information related to 2004/2005 Applications for Exceptions to the 1% Cap will be coming soon. The OEAA is reviewing the 2003/2004 application process to see what worked and what did not and will make revisions based on its review. Information on exceptions will be shared with the field via memoranda and e-mail messages on relevant Listservs.

NCLB Accountability Workbook Revisions: Each year states are allowed to amend their NCLB Accountability Workbooks. This year, the MDE recommended several amendments to the State Board of Education (SBE) at its March 8th meeting. Details on amendments that were approved by the SBE and subsequently submitted to the federal government will be discussed in the June 2005 issue of *The Assist*.

Changes for 2005/2006 That Affect IEP Team Decisions

In 2005/2006, the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS) is undergoing several changes as a result of requirements in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the recently reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Following is a summary of the changes that will affect Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team decisions. This article should be shared widely with IEP Team members so they can make informed choices about how their students will participate in state-level assessment.

More Grades Assessed

As required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), in 2005/2006, students in

grades 3 through 8 and 11 must be assessed in the state assessment system. (The law actually stipulates that students be assessed "once in high school." Michigan has chosen grade 11 to meet that requirement.) In the past, Michigan students have only been assessed at the state level in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, and 11. Therefore, IEP Teams with students entering grades 3 or 6 will need to complete the statewide assessment portion of their student's IEP for the first time. (See the article titled "Completing the IEP Assessment Form" on page 10 for more information.)

Move to Fall/Spring Testing

Since its inception, MI-Access has been administered during the last two

weeks of February through the month of March. Students, regardless of their grade, were assessed during the same window. In 2005/2006, however, the assessment window is moving. To be consistent with the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), elementary and middle school students will now be assessed in the fall and high school students will be assessed in the spring. The table below shows the dates of the MI-Access and MEAP assessment windows for the 2005/2006 school year. It is important for IEP Teams to understand these timing changes because they will affect IEP Team decisions related to state assessment.

continued on page 9

MEAP and MI-Access Assessment Windows for 2005/2006 School year

Year	MEAP Window	MI-Access Window
2005-2006	Fall Grades 3-8 October 3 – October 21 Fall High School (retest) October 24 – November 4 Spring High School Cycle 1: March 20 – March 31 Cycle 2: March 27 – April 7 Cycle 3: April 3 – April 14 ELL Assessments To be announced	Fall Grades 3-8 October 3 – November 11 Spring High School (Grade 11) February 27 – April 14

Technology Helps Students with Disabilities Access the Curriculum and Assessments

continued from page 3

- A Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Gogebic-Ontonogan ISD color-coded words into green and red to help students with directionality when reading/decoding words. Green signaled to students where to start reading a word and red signaled where to stop. The SLP also (1) chunked words into two parts to help students who had difficulty processing words in three or more chunks, and (2) used chunking pat-

terns that were more reflective of the students' speech patterns (such as grouping the first consonant and vowel of a three-letter word together instead of grouping the vowel with the last letter of the word).

- An Occupational Therapist in Menominee County ISD provided students with autism Post-It Highlighting Strips to use in place of more traditional highlighting mark-

ers. The strips enabled students who have difficulty with markers and note-taking to find and keep their place in written materials.

For more information or inquiries, contact MATR at: Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource, 1023 South U.S. 27, St. Johns, MI 48879; Phone: 800-274-7426; Fax: 989-224-0330; E-mail: matr@edzone.net; Web site: www.cenmi.org/matr.

Changes for 2005/2006 That Affect IEP Team Decisions

continued from page 8

New High School Assessment in Spring 2007

In the January 2005 issue of *The Assist*, it was noted that a state law was passed allowing the MEAP high school assessments to be replaced with a new assessment called the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The new assessment will be based either on the ACT or the College-Board SAT and supplemented with components of existing science and social studies assessments. If approved by the federal government, the MME will be administered for the first time in spring 2007. Therefore, while it is important for IEP Teams to know about this change, it will not affect assessment options this year or next.

No More Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE

The MI-Access Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments, as their name implies, were designed as interim assessments. They were used for two years while Michigan developed its own assessments for students who have, or function as if they have, mild cognitive impairment and meet the other characteristics of Functional Independence 2.1 and 2.2 students. Starting in 2005/2006, IEP Teams will need to determine whether students who were taking Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE should now take the MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 assessments or the MEAP with assessment accommodations. The *Draft Guidelines for Determining State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*—which are posted at www.mi.gov/mi-access—should be used to make that decision. (Remember, MI-Access assessments

are designed for a very small percentage of special education students.)

MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence Undergo Changes

In the past, MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessed some students on some of the Performance Expectations (PEs) and other students on other PEs. For example, Participation students in grades 4, 8, and 11B were assessed on PEs 2 and 4, and students in grades 7 and 11A were assessed on PEs 3 and 5. (Fourth-grade students were also assessed on PE 1.) In 2005/2006, that will no longer be the case. All PEs for each assessment will be assessed at all grades. In addition, the number of observations of an activity will be reduced from 2 to 1, sub-scores will be reported by PE, and there most likely will be one overall performance score that can be used for both English language arts and mathematics (for NCLB reporting purposes).

What are the implications for IEP Teams? Those teams with students taking MI-Access Participation will need to discuss “as expecteds for this student” for all of the PEs assessed. It is recommended that teams use the *Writing Quality “As Expecteds for This Student” Worksheet* to accomplish that task. The worksheet is posted at www.mi-access.info. (Please note that an online learning program is being developed regarding how to write high quality “as expecteds for this student.” Once it is available, IEP Teams may use it as well to inform their efforts.)

Extra! Extra! Last Paper Issue of *The Assist*

In August 2001, the first issue of *The Assist* was published and distributed to educators, parents, and other stakeholders around the state. Shortly thereafter, the MDE started distributing the bi-monthly newsletter electronically to recipients who preferred e-versions.

Now, in an effort to conserve resources, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has decided to distribute *only* e-versions of *The Assist*. The “Special Edition” April 2005 issue will be the last paper version of the newsletter.

To ensure that you continue receiving this informative publication, please be sure to sign up for the electronic version. You may do that in two ways:

1. Go to www.mi.gov/mi-access, scroll down to “Resources,” click on “Register to Receive *The Assist* newsletter,” and submit the requested information.
2. Sign up for one or more of the new Listservs offered by the OEAA. These Listservs are designed to keep a broad range of stakeholders who are interested in state assessment informed of major developments related to the MEAP and MI-Access. (Please note that this is different from the District MI-Access Coordinator Listserv, which is designed only for district coordinators.) To sign up for one or more of the new OEAA Listservs, send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.michigan.gov. In the body of the e-mail message, type “Subscribe ‘INSERT NAME OF LISTSERV’” (without the quotation marks) followed by your name (optional). Leave the subject line of the e-mail message blank. (See the article titled “Sign Up for New OEAA Listservs” on page 15 for more details on the specific Listservs that are available.)

Completing the IEP Assessment Form

As part of the IEP planning process, IEP Teams typically complete the Individualized Education Program Manual State- and Districtwide Assessment Form, which can be found in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services' (OSE/EIS) Michigan's Model Individualized Education Program (IEP) Manual.

When filling out the state portion of the assessment form, there are a number of important factors that IEP Team members need to keep in mind.

1. Is the student in a grade assessed at the state level? In the past, only students in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, and 11 were assessed at the state level. This year, because of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 will be assessed at the state level. IEP Teams need to keep this change in mind when discussing whether their student is in a grade assessed at the state level.

2. Is the assessment appropriate? Decisions about which statewide assessment is appropriate for a student need to be made content area by content area. So, for each content area assessed at a given grade, the IEP Team must determine whether the student will take the MEAP (with or without assessment accommodations) or MI-Access. The table below shows the content areas that are assessed at each grade level.

3. Is the MEAP inappropriate for the student? If the IEP Team determines that one or more MEAP content-area assessment is not appropriate for the student, it must specifically state why not. Keep in mind that the reason should be related to the student's level of independence, curriculum, and instruction. This is a very important piece of information if the district plans to apply to the state for an exception to the 1% cap, which refers to the number of "proficient" MI-Access scores that can be used when calculating a district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). (For more information on AYP, see the article titled "How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations" on page 4.)

4. Which alternate assessment will the student take? The IEP Team must also indicate on the assessment form which alternate assessment the student will take instead of the MEAP and why that assessment is appropriate for the student. The options available include MI-Access Participation, MI-Access Supported Independence, MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 English Language Arts, and MI-Access Functional Independence 2.1 Mathematics.

5. What about science and social studies? At this time, there are no state-level alternate assessments in the content areas of science and social studies. Therefore, if the team determines that the MEAP science and/or social studies assessment is inappropriate for the

student, it must indicate on the assessment form how else the student will be assessed. Results of these "other" assessments should be kept in the student's file for monitoring purposes.

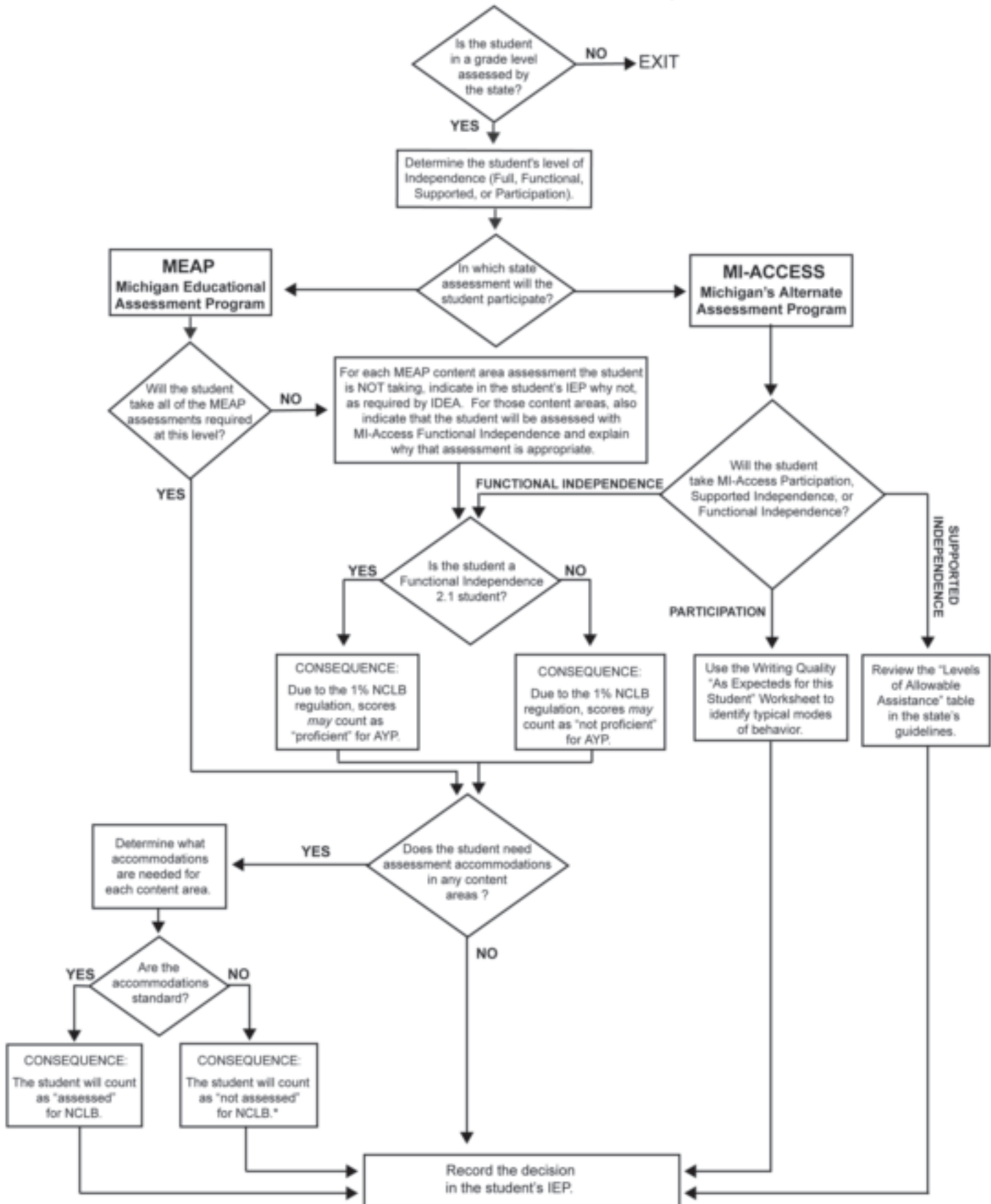
6. Does the student need assessment accommodations? In addition to an explanation of why a MEAP content-area assessment is inappropriate, IEP Teams must also list any assessment accommodations the student needs for MEAP and/or MI-Access.

7. Are the assessment accommodations standard? IEP Teams need to indicate if the assessment accommodations the student will use are standard. (A list of the MEAP standard and nonstandard accommodations can be found at www.mi.gov/meap and at www.mi-access.info under the "Policy and Guidelines" tab.) IEP Teams need to keep in mind that the U.S. Education Department (USED) has notified Michigan that if a student uses nonstandard accommodations, his or her assessment score will count as "not assessed" in NCLB participation rate calculations. Michigan is awaiting confirmation of this decision from the USED, but it is recommended that IEP Teams take this possibility into consideration if they are discussing the potential use of nonstandard accommodations. (See the article titled "How IEP Team Decisions Affect NCLB Calculations" on page 4 for more information.)

8. Will NAEP assessments be administered in 2005/2006? The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments are administered once every two years. Since they were administered in Michigan in 2004/2005, they will not be administered again until 2006/2007. Therefore, IEP Teams do not need to concern themselves with decisions regarding national testing in the 2005/2006 school year. (See the article titled "NAEP Testing Underway in Michigan and Across the Country" on pages 7 and 8 of the January 2005 issue of *The Assist* for more information on NAEP.)

Grades and Content Areas Assessed at the State Level

Content Areas	Grades							
	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	11th
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Science			X			X		X
Social Studies				X			X	



* Michigan is awaiting confirmation of this decision from the U.S. Education Department.

Updated Winter 2005

Use the *Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* to complete this checklist.

1. To start, determine if your student is in a grade assessed by the state. If so, proceed with the checklist.

2. Review the four “levels of independence” or how your student will likely function in adult life roles. Determine whether your student is Full, Functional, Supported Independence, or Participation.

3. Review the assessment options in the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS), including the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access, Michigan’s Alternate Assessment Program.

4. Use your student’s level of independence, curriculum, and instruction to determine which state assessment program is most appropriate for him/her. Is it the MEAP (with or without assessment accommodations), MI-Access, or a combination of the two?

If the team chooses the MEAP or a combination of the MEAP and MI-Access Functional Independence, proceed to number 5. If the team chooses MI-Access Functional Independence exclusively, proceed to number 10. If it chooses MI-Access Participation or Supported Independence, skip to number 7.

5. For **each** content area for which your student is taking the MEAP, specify which assessment accommodation(s) your team recommends. **CONSEQUENCE:** Keep in mind that if the accommodations are “standard,” your student will count as “assessed” for NCLB. If the assess-

ment accommodations are “nonstandard,” your student will count as “not assessed” for NCLB.*

If the student is taking the MEAP exclusively, skip to number 13. If he/she is taking a combination of MEAP and MI-Access Functional Independence, proceed to number 6.

6. For each MEAP content area assessment that the team deems inappropriate (English Language Arts as an example), indicate in the student’s IEP why that MEAP assessment is not appropriate for the student. Also (1) indicate that the student will be taking the MI-Access Functional Independence assessment in that content area, and (2) explain why that assessment is more appropriate.

Now, skip to number 10.

7. Will your student take MI-Access Participation or Supported Independence?

If the team chooses Participation, proceed to number 8. If it chooses Supported Independence, skip to number 9.

8. Use the *Writing Quality “As Expected For This Student” Worksheet* posted at www.mi-access.info to provide your student’s teacher with guidance on how your student typically behaves in given situations. The behavior should reflect your student’s curriculum and instruction and, even if typical, should not cause harm to the student or to others.

Now, skip to number 13.

9. Review the “Levels of Allowable Assistance” table in the state’s guidelines to see what assistance will be allowed during the assessment (based on your student’s age at the time of the assessment).

Now, skip to number 13.

10. If the team determines that your student should participate in MI-Access Functional Independence for one or more content area, determine if he/she is a 2.1 or 2.2 student. **CONSEQUENCE:** Due to the 1 percent NCLB regulation, if your student is a 2.1 student, his/her assessment scores *may* count as “proficient” for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). If, however, your student is a 2.2 student, his/her assessment scores *may* count as “not proficient” for AYP.

11. For **each** content area for which your student is taking MI-Access Functional Independence, will he/she need assessment accommodations?

12. If so, specify which assessment accommodation(s) your team recommends for each content area. **CONSEQUENCE:** Keep in mind that if the accommodations are “standard,” your student will count as “assessed” for NCLB. If the assessment accommodations are “nonstandard,” your student will count as “not assessed” for NCLB.*

13. Record all decisions in the student’s IEP.

* Michigan is awaiting confirmation of this decision from the U.S. Education Department.

IDEA 2004: What's New?

In December 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA*) of 2004 was signed into law, thereby reauthorizing IDEA 1997. Among other things, it includes additional requirements for states regarding (1) participation in state- and districtwide assessments, (2) performance goals and indicators, and (3) Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This article describes some of those changes and what Michigan is doing to ensure that the state is in compliance with the reauthorized Act.

Participation in State- and Districtwide Assessment

IDEA 2004 includes additional requirements for states related to participation in state- and districtwide assessment programs. For example, in Section 612(16), the law now

- uses the word “all” before “children with disabilities” when discussing who must participate in state- and districtwide assessments, and
- includes in the definition of state- and districtwide assessments all assessments “described under section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 with appropriate assessment accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated by a student’s IEP.”

In addition, IDEA 1997 already stipulated that the state (or, in the case of districtwide assessments, the LEA) develop and implement guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in regular assessments with accommodations as indicated in their respective IEPs. Now, however, IDEA 2004 has added that the guidelines must cover

both (1) alternate assessments that are aligned with the state’s challenging academic content and achievement standards, as well as (2) alternate assessments that are based on *alternate* academic achievement standards (if the state has adopted them).

With regard to reports, IDEA 1997 had required that states and LEAs report to the public on the performance of children with disabilities with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the performance of nondisabled children. Now, with IDEA 2004, the reports must also include

- the number of children with disabilities who were provided accommodations in order to participate in regular assessments,
- the number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments with the same challenging student academic achievement standards as nondisabled children,
- the number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments with alternate achievement standards, and
- the performance of children with disabilities on regular and alternate assessments compared with the achievement of all children, including those with disabilities, on those same assessments (that is, if the number of children with disabilities participating in the two types of assessments is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information and if reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student).

Finally, the new law requires that states and LEAs use universal design principles—to the extent possible—when developing and administering assessments.

At this time, the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) is in the process of reviewing these new requirements and making plans to ensure that Michigan’s assessments meet them. During the review process, the OEAA is—or will soon be—undertaking a number of activities, including

1. reviewing Michigan’s *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*;
2. reviewing Michigan’s standard and nonstandard assessment accommodations for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), MI-Access, and the soon-to-be-administered English Language Proficiency Assessment for English Language Learners;
3. developing guidelines for the provision of appropriate assessment accommodations;
4. developing additional online learning programs on such topics as (a) instructional and assessment accommodations, and (b) how to understand, use, and interpret MI-Access assessment results;
5. extending the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) in English language arts and mathematics for MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence students;

continued on page 14

IDEA 2004: What's New?

continued from page 13

6. developing new MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessments aligned to the extended GLCEs in English language arts and mathematics;
7. extending the science benchmarks for MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence students; and
8. developing MI-Access science assessments that are aligned to the extended benchmarks and/or GLCEs.

Performance Goals and Indicators

In Section 612(15), IDEA 2004 addresses the performance goals and indicators that states have been required to establish for the performance of children with disabilities. The new act has added language stipulating that those goals must be "the same as the state's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress, including the state's objectives for progress by children with disabilities, under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of ESEA 1965."

It further stipulates that states

- may use other factors—in addition to graduation rates and dropout rates—to "address" the goals,
- may use measurable annual objectives for progress by children with disabilities under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II)(cc) of ESEA 1965 to assess progress toward achieving the goals,
- must report annually (instead of every two years) the progress of children with disabilities toward meeting the state's established goals; and
- may include elements of reports already required under section 1111(h) of ESEA 1965 in their progress reports to the Secretary of Education.

Assessment and IEPs

With regard to assessment and IEPs, IDEA 2004 makes two wording adjustments and several other substantive changes. First, in Section 614(5)(d) "present levels of educational performance" has been changed to "present levels of academic achievement and functional performance." The law also has inserted the word "make" into its language so that now children with disabilities will "be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum."

Second, with regard to substantive changes, IDEA 2004 requires that IEPs now include

- a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for children with disabilities who take alternate assessments that are aligned to alternate achievement standards,
- a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports of the progress will be provided (as opposed to just a statement of measurable annual goals),
- a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state- and districtwide general and alternate assessments,
- a statement explaining why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment (that is, if the IEP Team makes the decision that the regular assessment is not appropriate), and
- a statement explaining why the alternate assessment identified by the team is more appropriate for the child.

The MDE's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) is in the process of revising the Michigan's model *Individualized Education Program (IEP) Manual* to meet these new requirements. In order to accomplish that task, the OSE/EIS is teaming with the State Board of Education-appointed Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the IDEA Partnership Team. A revised draft will be available for public comment from April 15th through June 15th.

Once the public comments have been compiled, the OSE/EIS will provide a summary to the SEAC for review, comment, and any additional recommendations. The OSE/EIS will incorporate the comments, as appropriate, into a second draft of the Michigan's model *Individualized Education Program (IEP) Manual*, which will include all of the new requirements for state- and districtwide assessment as well as other components of the IEP that are necessary to meet IDEA 2004 requirements. That revised draft—after review by the SEAC—will then go to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The intent of the OSE/EIS is to have a final version of the new Michigan's model *Individualized Education Program (IEP) Manual* ready by July 1, 2005 when the IDEA 2004 reauthorization goes into effect.

To order a side-by-side comparison of IDEA 1997 (P.L. 105-17) and IDEA 2004 (H.R. 1350 as passed by Congress), go to www.nasde.org.

**Note: The new legislation refers to the act in two different ways—as IDEA and IDEIA. Until a final decision is made regarding which acronym will be used, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program will refer to the reauthorization as IDEA 2004.*

Sign Up for New OEAA Listservs

Over the years, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (ASWDP) has received numerous requests from people to be added to its District MI-Access Coordinator Listserv. Since that Listserv is reserved *only* for District MI-Access Coordinators, the ASWDP has not been able to honor these requests. Now, however, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) is developing other Listservs to help meet a broad range of assessment and accountability information needs.

There are five new OEAA Listservs—four that are targeted to individuals with special interests and one broad, umbrella Listserv that will be used to send messages to a general audience, including individuals on the special interest Listservs.

Following is a description of the five new OEAA Listservs.

1. **MDE – Accountability:** This Listserv is for individuals interested specifically in issues related to Education Yes! and NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). (Available Now)
2. **MDE – ASWD:** This Listserv is for individuals interested specifically in state assessment of students with disabilities. (Available Now)
3. **MDE – Assessing ELL:** This Listserv is for individuals interested specifically in the assessment of English Language Learners. (Coming Soon)

4. **MDE – MEAP:** This Listserv is for individuals interested specifically in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. (Available Now)
5. **MDE – OEAA:** This is a broad, umbrella Listserv designed for members of all the special interest lists as well as others who want periodic communications related to assessment and accountability. (Available Now)

You may sign up for one or more of these Listservs depending on your interests and needs. (Please note that if you join any of the special interest Listservs, you will automatically be signed up for MDE-OEAA. You may also subscribe *only* to MDE-OEAA if you prefer, keeping in mind that you will *not* receive any special interest messages.)

To sign up, simply send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.michigan.gov. In the body of the e-mail message, type "Subscribe 'INSERT NAME OF LISTSERV'" (without the quotation marks) followed by your name (optional). For example, if you want to join the MDE-ASWD Listserv, you would type: Subscribe MDE-ASWD Jane Doe. Be sure to leave the subject line of the e-mail message blank.

Please spread the word about the availability of these new Listservs to colleagues, educators, parents, and other community members with an interest in state assessment. They are free and open to the public.

GLOSSARY



Adequate Yearly Progress: A formula, introduced in No Child Left Behind and approved by the State Board of Education, that is used to identify successful Title 1 schools as well as schools in need of improvement. It is also used in Education Yes!, the state's accreditation system, to calculate school grades. A school is in "school improvement status" if it fails to make AYP for two consecutive years in a particular content area.

Full Academic Year: To be considered enrolled for a full academic year and, therefore, eligible for inclusion in AYP calculations, a student must have been enrolled for the two most recent semi-annual official count days.

Attendance Rate: One of the indicators of AYP for elementary and middle school students, it is equal to the aggregate total number of days of actual attendance for all students in a school, divided by the aggregate total number of possible days of attendance for all students (based upon each student's date of enrollment), and multiplied by 100.

Graduation Rate: One of the indicators of AYP for high school students, it is the percentage of a cohort of students that earns a regular diploma within four years (from ninth to twelfth grade), with IEP Teams determining the appropriate time span for each student with a disability.

Extended Grade Level Content Expectations: Indicators of what students should know and be able to do in specific grades (kindergarten through eighth grade) that have been "extended" for the various student populations targeted by Michigan's alternate assessments (MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence 2.1).

Important MI-Access Dates

Tested Roster Dates for MI-Access Winter 2005 Assessments

April 13 – April 26, 2005

April 18 – May 2, 2005

April 25 – May 9, 2005

Deadline for Demographic Updates

May 9, 2005

MI-Access Winter 2005 Reports

Shipped first week of June

MI-Access Fall 2005 Assessment Window Grades 3-8

October 3, 2005 – November 11, 2005

MI-Access Spring 2006 Assessment Window Grade 11

February 27, 2006 – April 14, 2006



Bookmark these Web sites:

www.cenmi.org/matr

Michigan Assistive Technology Resource

www.nochildleftbehind.gov

www.nasde.org

**National Association of State Directors of Special
Education**

www.mi.gov/oeaa

www.mi.gov/meap

www.mi.gov/mi-access

www.mi-access.info

This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. *The Assist* may also be downloaded from the MI-Access Web page at www.mi.gov/mi-access.

If you receive multiple copies of this
newsletter, please share them with:

Teachers

Related Services Providers

Parents

School Libraries

Community Organizations

Michigan Department of Education
MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program
P.O. Box 30008 Lansing, MI 48909

